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South Africa Confronts Its Neighbors: The Coercive Use of Power



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An Intelligence Assessment

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*ALA 83-10038X
March 1983*

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South Africa Confronts Its Neighbors: The Coercive Use of Power

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted] Office of
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**South Africa Confronts
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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 9 February 1983
was used in this report.*

Since 1975, and particularly since Prime Minister Botha came to power in 1978, South Africa's past emphasis on peaceful coexistence and economic cooperation with its neighbors has given way to a more pronounced reliance on the coercive use of its power advantages over nearby black regimes. The new look in Pretoria's regional policy has been marked not only by aggressive military operations against South African insurgent groups—primarily the African National Congress (ANC) and the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO)—but also by efforts to keep these groups' main sponsors, Angola and Mozambique, weak and distracted through the expansion of South Africa's support for insurgent movements in both these countries. Pretoria's support for insurgent attacks on infrastructure targets in neighboring countries also helps preserve its economic leverage over black governments—leverage that the South Africans use on the political level to force these governments to behave in a less openly hostile manner.

A number of factors have contributed to the more hawkish South African approach to regional affairs. They include the replacement of relatively benign, white-controlled governments in neighboring states by Communist-supported black regimes, the institutionalization in the South African decisionmaking system of a hardline, military point of view, and the further development of a "siege mentality" within South Africa's white community.

Neither Communist nor Western reactions to South Africa's aggressive dealings toward its neighbors have dissuaded Pretoria from a policy that it believes has successfully served its immediate security concerns:

- US representations may have caused Pretoria to cancel some military operations into southern Angola and temporarily to stop tightening the economic screws on Zimbabwe. But the overall record of South African actions is evidence that Western pressure has had little enduring or fundamental effect.
- The expansion of Communist involvement in the region that has occurred since 1975—as Moscow and its allies exploited black African jitters about South African intentions—has also had little visible deterrent effect. To the contrary, South African officials regularly point to such developments as Soviet arms sales to Zambia and the growing Soviet and

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Cuban presence in Angola and Mozambique as evidence of the hostile intentions of neighboring black regimes and of the need for preemptive action by Pretoria.

As a result, we anticipate that Pretoria will continue to emphasize coercion in its dealings with its neighbors. Developments in Mozambique, where any further expansion of the activities of the South African-backed National Resistance Movement (NRM) could either bring President Machel down or force him to call for Cuban combat troops, will test the limits of South African boldness. Either eventuality would have major consequences for South Africa, forcing it in the first instance to divert massive resources to prop up a group in Maputo that would be woefully unprepared to rule and in the second instance to divert military resources from the Namibian front.

Pretoria may stop short of trying to overthrow neighboring black governments in the face of practical realities such as those in Mozambique. Even so, continued South African aggressiveness along the lines we anticipate will, in our view, continue to complicate US policy toward southern Africa:

- We believe, for example, that South Africa's support for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), coupled with its hard line on the Cuban withdrawal issue, will continue to block an internationally sanctioned Namibian settlement even as the South African military presence in southern Angola whets Luanda's interest in such a settlement.
- In the absence of a Namibian peace settlement, and, in the face of continued military pressure from internal dissidents, black leaders throughout the region will remain receptive to Soviet Bloc offers of military and political backing.
- Continued South African assertiveness will also act as a drag on US relations with individual black governments and with black Africa as a whole. Most black leaders exaggerate the degree of leverage the United States has over South Africa and will blame Washington for failing to rein in Pretoria.

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Ultimately, of course, the South Africans' unbridled use of their power could create a situation they would not be able to control. The relative success of their tough policies may in fact be blinding them to the limits of their power and to the capabilities of the USSR to respond on behalf of the targeted black regimes.

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South Africa and Its Neighbors



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South Africa Confronts Its Neighbors: The Coercive Use of Power

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Introduction

Underlying Pretoria's foreign policies, in our view, is the same fundamental objective that dominates its domestic policies: the maintenance of white rule in South Africa. Any conceivable threat to white rule from black Africa was remote, however, until developments between 1975 and 1980 made Pretoria's neighborhood a far more dangerous and hostile place. This five-year period saw the replacement of friendly, white-controlled governments in key neighboring states by leftist black regimes, a dramatic growth of the Communist presence in the region, and a surge of black civil unrest and insurgent activities inside South Africa. This created the specter of what South Africa's white minority fears most—a combination of internal revolt and external attack, both Communist backed.

Despite its involvement in the Angolan civil war, its occasional operations against insurgents of the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in southern Angola and southwestern Zambia, and its military support for Rhodesia, Pretoria during this traumatic half decade of change continued to pursue a policy toward its black neighbors that emphasized cooperation, coexistence, and economic interdependence. By 1980, however, there were signs that the new realities of Pretoria's immediate world were causing South Africans to rethink their approach to regional dealings. It is now clear that Prime Minister P. W. Botha's advent to power midway through the period ushered in a set of new regional policies. This paper attempts to explain these changes, how they came about, and what we might expect in the future.

The Evolution of Attitudes

In April 1979, less than a year after taking office, Botha unveiled his "constellation of states" scheme as the centerpiece of South Africa's regional policies.

The proposal was an elaboration of some regional policy themes—labeled *rapprochement* and *detente*—that had been periodically promoted by both of his immediate predecessors, B. J. Vorster and H. F. Verwoerd. As presented by Botha and other senior spokesmen, the constellation policy envisioned the emergence of a regional detente in southern Africa built on a complex web of economic cooperation and political and security understandings between South Africa and its neighbors. The constellation proposal was accompanied by a much ballyhooed conference of senior government and business leaders—held in November 1979 in Johannesburg—at which the Prime Minister called on white businesses to expand regional trade, increase investments in neighboring states, and take other steps to promote regional economic integration.

Black states in the region almost immediately rejected any political and security involvement with South Africa and took steps to form their own economic-oriented countergrouping. Finance Ministers of Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, and Tanzania, and Zambia's Minister of Transportation met in July 1979 to review proposals for regional cooperation aimed at reducing South Africa's economic dominance in the region. This meeting led to the establishment of the nine-member Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in April 1980, by which time few leaders in the region took Pretoria's constellation notion seriously.

The failure of Pretoria's constellation scheme was accompanied by an even more disturbing development in neighboring Zimbabwe: the election victory of avowedly Marxist and vehemently antiapartheid Robert Mugabe. The transformation of white-ruled Rhodesia into black-controlled Zimbabwe would have had a significant enough impact on South Africa had Ian Smith's black ally, Abel Muzorewa, won at the

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polls. But the unexpected landslide victory by Mugabe—whom Pretoria had labeled a “Marxist terrorist”—was a profound shock to South Africa, bringing home to whites of all walks of life the depth of their own historical predicament and hardening their outlook on external and internal policy issues. [redacted]

At the decisionmaking level in Pretoria, Mugabe's victory accelerated what had been a fairly gradual shift of influence away from a relatively moderate viewpoint toward a more hawkish outlook. This trend had begun fairly early in Botha's administration as military careerists, whose loyalty Botha had gained during his 15 years as Defense Minister, moved into key positions in the decisionmaking structure, and as Botha remodeled the structure itself to increase his control over it.¹ [redacted]

We lack precise information on how specific policy positions have been hammered out. [redacted]

[redacted] policy debates became increasingly divided as the Botha administration settled in. On major regional policy issues, in particular, the military newcomers tended to push positions founded on a no-nonsense policy outlook in which short-term security concerns predominate and that stress direct and bold use of South Africa's economic and military advantages over its neighbors. [redacted]

These hardline positions often clashed with those taken by members of the traditional foreign policy establishment represented by National Party politicians and careerists from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information (DFAI). The politicians and DFAI officials for the most part tended to take a longer view of regional developments and favored a more cautious exploitation of the country's regional power advantages by exercising the conventional foreign policy tools of diplomacy and economic assistance. Prime Minister Botha apparently swung to one side or the other in the running debate, depending on the issue, but he leaned increasingly toward hardline positions as he gained confidence in the foreign policy realm. [redacted]

Mugabe's election victory in February 1980 seriously weakened the position of the moderates in Pretoria—particularly the DFAI careerists—who had already suffered a setback because of the failure of their constellation policy. Along with the civilian National Intelligence Service (NIS), the careerists had stuck to their prediction of a Muzorewa victory to the end.

This reversal did not lead to political scapegoating or cabinet resignations such as might have occurred in Western governments under similar circumstances: Afrikaner traditions of strength and unity in the face of adversity militate against such displays of disarray. The general thrust of policy after mid-1980 and the tenor of reports on policy debates make it clear, however, that Foreign Minister Roelof Botha and other moderates—recognizing that the momentum had swung in favor of the hardliners, sensing toughening of white attitudes, and questioning the validity of their own past assumptions about the possibilities of living in peace with black Marxist regimes—accommodated themselves increasingly to the hardline viewpoint [redacted]

The view that came to dominate in Pretoria after mid-1980 was encapsulated recently by a South African policy adviser, who said that nearby black regimes had to support anti-South African insurgent organizations if only to maintain their credibility as African leaders. The adviser, whose views the US Embassy believes reflect the thinking of senior officials, asserted that conflict between South Africa and its neighbors is inevitable. Other officials have gone further by suggesting that efforts by Pretoria to encourage regional stability and to obtain its neighbors' good will and cooperation through economic inducements only risks strengthening fundamentally hostile regimes. Logic of this sort plainly underlies South Africa's shift toward a more pronounced reliance on coercive means of influence over its neighbors. [redacted]

South Africa's Regional Priorities

We doubt that South Africa proceeds within the region from any grand strategy and believe instead that leaders in Pretoria react to events and seize

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opportunities as they present themselves. Nevertheless, under Botha's administration decisions on dealings with individual black states appear to be made within a framework of general objectives and priorities. [redacted]

Attacking Anti-South African Insurgents

A principal and immediate concern of South Africa in its dealings with its neighbors is the extent to which they provide support to anti-South African insurgents. Pretoria's chief target is the African National Congress (ANC), which has been particularly active since the suppression of the Soweto riots of 1976 when its ranks were swelled by black youth emigrating from South Africa to neighboring black states. Since that time, our records indicate the ANC has been responsible for several hundred terrorist incidents inside South Africa. Most of these incidents have been minor, but they have included a daring hostage-taking incident at a suburban Pretoria bank in early 1980, sabotage of the SASOL synthetic fuel plants later that year, and the bombing last December of the Koeberg nuclear power plant outside of Cape Town. [redacted]

These incidents aroused white fears and heightened government concern about the ANC and its external sanctuaries. Repeated public warnings by South African political and military leaders that Pretoria would employ a "forward defense" strategy, that is, it would strike against terrorist bases wherever they are found, have been carried out. The most notable examples have been an attack in June 1980 on ANC safehouses in Swaziland, the raid in January 1981 on ANC facilities in the Maputo area, and the operation last December against ANC personnel in Maseru, Lesotho. [redacted]

South Africa's anxieties about its black majority are so severe, in our judgment, that no independent black African state can escape Pretoria's suspicion that it is actively supporting the ANC. [redacted]

[redacted] we believe that only relatively distant Angola permits the ANC to operate freely. Although Mozambique serves as an important transit route for ANC guerrillas, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland restrict the ANC to political activity. The ANC, however, often succeeds in circumventing these restrictions, and this fuels South

African suspicions that these states are turning a blind eye to the group or are not doing everything possible to control its activities. [redacted]

As the leadership in Pretoria has surveyed the results of its "forward defense" against ANC insurgents, it has probably become increasingly convinced that it is on the right course. Despite occasional incidents of ANC sabotage, the campaign against ANC targets has prevented any major escalation of ANC violence inside South Africa. [redacted]

"Forward defense"—taking the war to the insurgents' sanctuaries—has also become South Africa's primary way of dealing with SWAPO. Even before Pretoria's shift of emphasis from carrots to sticks in its regional dealings, the South African Defense Force (SADF) in the late 1970s conducted raids against SWAPO targets in southwestern Zambia, but generally in response to specific insurgent actions such as the SWAPO attack on Katima Mulilo in August 1978. Zambian President Kaunda responded by restricting SWAPO's use of Zambian territory. By 1980 SWAPO had moved its principal bases of operation to Angola. [redacted]

As Angola became the major home base for SWAPO insurgents, [redacted]

[redacted] the SADF increased its permanent troop strength in northern Namibia from 8,500 in 1978 to about 15,000 in 1981.² With the exception of a few spectacular deep penetration attacks into Angola, however, Pretoria's initial efforts against SWAPO were confined to skirmishes along the borders and to limited, hot pursuit raids. In June 1980

² We estimate that the SADF now maintains a force of 22,000 to 25,000 men in Namibia. [redacted]

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the SADF launched its first extended search-and-destroy operation against SWAPO. A subsequent military incursion into Angola in mid-1981—Operation Protea—was the largest and most ambitious such undertaking since Pretoria's intervention during the Angolan civil war in 1975. It included airstrikes against Cuban-manned radar installations in southern Angola and devastating attacks by South African ground forces against Angolan military units and, in our opinion, was intended to deter Angolan and Cuban support for SWAPO in the frontier area. Since that time, Pretoria has created and maintained control of a buffer zone in southern Angola and has carried out several major incursions in reaction to Angolan and SWAPO actions [redacted]

South Africa's aggressive military strategy has kept the SWAPO insurgency sputtering. SADF incursions into southern Angola have taken a heavy toll on insurgent ranks, and the buffer zone north of the border has seriously hampered guerrilla infiltration. Moreover, the punishment Angolan forces have taken at the hands of the SADF has created strains between SWAPO and Angolan leaders. Under these conditions, local counterinsurgency forces inside Namibia have had a fairly easy time in confining the insurgency to the border region—especially Ovamboland, SWAPO's ethnic homeland; the few guerrilla bands that have been able to penetrate into the economically vital white-controlled areas have been quickly crushed. [redacted]

Creating Instability and Maintaining Dependence

Pretoria's growing skepticism about the possibilities of peaceful coexistence with neighboring black states, we believe, has led it to adopt a second major regional priority: keeping its neighbors—particularly those it regards as most hostile—weak and dependent. This is evident in the pattern of South African involvement in regional insurgencies, its ready use of its economic and transportation leverage, [redacted]

In *Angola*, which South Africa regards as its most hostile neighbor, Pretoria has been providing support to the insurgency of Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) since the two joined forces in an unsuccessful attempt to

prevent the rival Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) from assuming power at independence in 1975. The extent of South Africa's support has been difficult to assess, [redacted]

[redacted] we believe it has included medicines, helicopter evacuation of wounded, financial credits, arms and ammunition, military training, communications assistance, trucks and fuel, [redacted]

With South African support, UNITA in recent months has expanded the area and the intensity of its operations. In addition, it has kept the Benguela railroad virtually closed since 1975. This has served South Africa's regional objectives by keeping land-locked Zambia and Zaire dependent on South African transportation facilities.³ [redacted]

In *Mozambique*, which Pretoria probably regards as its second most hostile neighbor, the South Africans have gradually expanded their backing for the National Resistance Movement (NRM) since taking over sponsorship of the guerrillas from the Rhodesians in early 1980. [redacted]

³ While South Africa derives only limited benefits from its economic ties to black Africa, these ties are critically important to its neighbors. In addition to Pretoria's near stranglehold on the region's transportation network, neighboring states depend on South Africa for the bulk of their exports and imports. [redacted]

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[REDACTED]

NRM attacks on economic targets in Mozambique have an important side effect in maintaining *Zimbabwe's* dependence on South African transportation links. The NRM has regularly sabotaged the fuel pipeline connecting Zimbabwe to the Mozambican port of Beira—the only alternative to using South African transportation facilities to ship oil to Zimbabwe. NRM attacks have also closed or disrupted rail lines connecting Zimbabwe directly with ports in Mozambique. [REDACTED]

In addition to these interruptions of Zimbabwe's non-South African links to the outside world, evidence is accumulating that the country has become the third principal target—after Angola and Mozambique—of Pretoria's overall regional strategy of fostering turmoil and instability. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Compared with Pretoria's support for UNITA and NRM operations, South African efforts to fan internal dissidence in Zimbabwe is a sideshow, but it has added significantly to the worries of the Mugabe government. The frictions that have emerged between Mugabe's ruling Shona tribe and Joshua Nkomo's Ndebeles as well as between the country's blacks and whites are rooted in history and would have increased on their own accord. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Forcing Respect

A peripheral but still important factor at work in Pretoria is its concern that neighboring black regimes deal with South Africa more "normally" or at least in a less openly hostile manner in the public realm. Although South African DFAI officials acknowledge that black African states must indulge in anti-South African rhetoric, if only for domestic political reasons,

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most white South Africans, including several cabinet members, appear sensitive to verbal and diplomatic slights from neighboring countries. Senior officials frequently complain publicly, as well as in private conversations with US officials, that South Africa's neighbors do not give Pretoria respect commensurate with its position in the region. South African leaders were visibly irritated, for example, when Zimbabwe did not invite Pretoria to send a delegation to attend independence ceremonies when Mugabe took power. Since then, anti-South African rhetoric from Harare has been the source of considerable tension between the two countries. []

Pretoria's desire for what amounts to tacit diplomatic relations with its neighbors appears to have become stronger even as it has acted in ways that have increased tensions with those neighbors. It tried, for example, to exploit Zimbabwe's fuel shortage this January, which South Africa had a hand in creating, to force Harare to negotiate at the ministerial level over a long-term fuel supply contract. Moreover, recent top-level meetings between South African officials and their Angolan and Mozambican counterparts have been widely publicized in South Africa, and Foreign Minister Botha in an interview in late 1982 made plain his satisfaction that Luanda and Maputo had begun to deal more "normally" with Pretoria. []

Pretoria's Balance Sheet

As the leadership in Pretoria surveys the results of its shift toward a more assertive regional policy, we believe that it sees few disincentives to staying the course. Domestically, the current approach is playing well. A recent poll showed that 80 percent of the white population supports military strikes into countries harboring anti-South African insurgents; most whites even said they would support government food embargoes against such countries. Since early 1983 the Botha administration has been grilled by the English-speaking political parties and newspapers over public revelations on the extent of South Africa's involvement with the NRM. This sort of political heat is almost certainly preferable to Botha than the more politically damaging criticism he would face if right-wing parties in the ruling Afrikaner community

thought he was not doing enough to combat anti-South African insurgents. []

International pressure on South Africa to modify its coercive activities in the region have, in our view, had some effect in Pretoria. South Africa over the years has become inured to censure from the United Nations and Third World states and shrugs off condemnations of the sort it received following the raids on Matola and Maseru. Pressure from specific Western governments is another matter, however. We believe that official US representations have caused Pretoria to cancel some plans for military operations in Angola and temporarily to stop tightening the economic screws on Zimbabwe in late 1981. Nevertheless, the overall record of South African actions suggests to us that Western pressure has had little enduring or fundamental effect to date in softening South Africa's policy toward its neighbors. []

The expansion of Communist involvement in the region that has occurred as Moscow and Havana have exploited black African jitters about South Africa's intentions has also had little visible deterrent effect so far on Pretoria.⁵ To the contrary, South African officials regularly point to such developments as the USSR's sizable arms sales to Zambia and the growing Soviet and Cuban presence in Mozambique and Angola as evidence of the hostile intentions of neighboring regimes and of the need for preemptive action on Pretoria's part. Western warnings that South

⁵ The Soviets over the past five years have concluded several new arms sales agreements in the region—most notably a \$200 million accord with Zambia in 1979 and a \$7 million pact with Botswana in 1980. Moscow and Havana also have significantly expanded their military relationships with Angola and Mozambique during this period. In Angola, the Soviets have replaced all the materiel the South Africans captured and destroyed in Operation Protea, and, since early 1981, they have been introducing some new and more sophisticated equipment. The number of Cuban military personnel in Angola rose from 15,000 to 20,000 in 1980 to 25,000 to 30,000 by early 1983. Cuban involvement in counterinsurgency operations against UNITA has increased significantly since early 1982. The Soviets and Cubans have gradually increased their advisory assistance to the Mozambicans as the NRM insurgency has heated up. Moreover, Soviet ships have made several deliveries of military equipment to Maputo in mid-1982. []

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South Africa's World View

Pretoria's behavior in the southern African region, in our view, is influenced by broader attitudes toward black Africa, the West, and the Soviet Union, which are widely shared by white South Africans of all walks of life and, which form the common basis for much of the official and unofficial commentary on foreign affairs. [redacted]

"Black Africa Is Dying"

South Africans maintain that European colonial rule ended too soon, leaving black Africans incapable of dealing with the political and economic challenges of the 20th century. Insisting that racism does not underlie their belief that black Africans are "immature," South Africans argue that "Africa is dying" without the civilizing influence of white rule, and that independent black African states have become impoverished and chaotic "Marxist" states that are easy prey for Communist adventurers. [redacted]

South Africa's seeming obsession with events in Zimbabwe since its independence in 1980 reflects these attitudes; indeed, almost every instance of what whites perceive as decay in "civilized" standards is carefully chronicled in the South African press. Thus, any successful black African state would challenge the fundamental precept of white rulers in South Africa that "uncivilized" black Africans need the guiding hand of whites in order to survive in the modern world. Pretoria probably would view the existence of any stable and prosperous black-ruled state on its border as an incentive for rebellion among South African blacks. [redacted]

Ambivalence Toward the West

Despite their growing international isolation since the Afrikaners came to power in 1948, white South Africans tend to identify with the West. They emphasize their World War II contributions and their continuing role as guardians of the important Cape sea route and as suppliers of strategic minerals. South African whites see particular parallels between their country and the United States and take pride in them. This is coupled to a sense of betrayal, however, that gives the relationship a "love-hate" aspect. Many whites resent Western opposition to apartheid

and believe that Pretoria's role as an outpost for Western, Christian, and democratic values is undervalued. Numerous white leaders have repeatedly and strongly expressed their belief that they were abandoned by the United States when it did not support South Africa's intervention in the Angolan civil war; a common theme in South Africa's official defense of its policies is that Western governments have no right to infringe on Pretoria's freedom of action in domestic and regional affairs. [redacted]

Soviet Demonology

South African leaders identify the Soviet Union as the country's principal adversary. They see Moscow as taking advantage of every opportunity—from backing anti-South African insurgents to arming hostile governments on its border—to strike at South Africa. By derivation, Pretoria argues, the Soviets are attacking the West—for whom continued South African dominance of the region is described as "vital." [redacted]

The leadership in Pretoria also plays up the "Soviet menace" to make common cause with the West and to deflect Western attention from the apartheid issue. In addition, publicity for the Soviet threat is useful for domestic political purposes. To meet the combined threat of domestic opposition, foreign-based "terrorists," and Soviet expansionism, South African leaders have elevated security concerns above all others in domestic propaganda. The "total onslaught" theme was given heavy play last year when the government made military service compulsory for all white males up to age 55. Domestic critics of the government's racial policies are often discredited with the charge that they are doing Moscow's bidding. [redacted]

Nonetheless, white leaders are undoubtedly aware of the risks of overplaying this hand. While worried over the danger to South Africa from an expanded Soviet presence along its borders, Pretoria is probably also concerned that increased Soviet activity in the region might trigger a Western response that could work to the detriment of South Africa's freedom of action in the region. [redacted]

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Africa's heavyhandedness toward its neighbors serves to fuel a deepening cycle of action and reaction that plays to the advantage of Moscow and Havana appears to have had little impact. [REDACTED]

Outlook

We anticipate that South Africa will continue to expect the worst from its black neighbors and to pursue policies toward them that emphasize coercion over conciliation. The gradual shift in Pretoria's regional outlook and approach that has occurred since 1975 is rooted in fundamental changes that have occurred in recent years. These include the advent to power of Communist-backed black regimes along South Africa's periphery, the institutionalization of a hardline, military point of view in the South African decisionmaking apparatus, and the development of a "survival state" mentality within the country's white population. [REDACTED]

As a result, we believe Pretoria will maintain military pressure on the ANC and SWAPO while keeping the main sponsors of these groups weak and distracted by supporting such groups as UNITA and the NRM. We also expect South Africa to continue mounting covert operations against Zimbabwe and to use its leverage aggressively in a variety of ways to maintain its economic dominance of the region and induce less hostile political behavior by its black neighbors. [REDACTED]

Pretoria's dealings with individual black states may even become more aggressive in the future depending on circumstances. The situation in Mozambique may, in fact, provide an early test of the limits of South African boldness. When Pretoria took over sponsorship of the NRM from the Ian Smith government in 1980, it appeared to do so with fairly limited objectives in mind: providing a bargaining chip against Mozambican support for the ANC, disrupting Zimbabwe's transportation routes through Mozambique, and keeping the Machel government enfeebled. Thanks in part to extensive South African support, however, NRM operations over the past year have gained momentum to the point where any further

expansion of the insurgency threatens either to bring Machel down or force him to call in Cuban combat troops to save his regime. [REDACTED]

Either development would have major consequences for South Africa. Despite their private assertions to US officials that the arrival of Cuban combat troops would trigger large-scale South African attacks on Mozambique, the prospect of being drawn into an escalating cycle of clashes along South Africa's eastern borders must be daunting to even the most confident military planners in Pretoria. Almost a fourth of the 100,000-man SADF is already tied down on the Namibia front, and an effort to sustain large-scale operations along the Mozambican border would stretch the SADF's logistics and air capabilities dangerously thin and limit the military's capabilities to respond to any internal "emergency." [REDACTED]

If the Machel government fell to the NRM, Pretoria would be faced with the expensive and dubious prospect of underwriting a group whose ability to attract popular support, [REDACTED] is doubted [REDACTED]

and that appears to us to be in numerous other ways woefully unprepared to rule without massive South African assistance. Strategy papers endorsed by the top-level State Security Council in late 1981 listed as long-term goals the overthrow of hostile neighboring regimes and their replacement by friendly governments. We are not convinced, however, that Pretoria would push such goals when faced with practical considerations such as those that currently exist in Mozambique. [REDACTED]

Even if South Africa puts on the brakes in Mozambique and stops short of trying to replace black regimes elsewhere, the current climate in Pretoria could give rise to another sort of adventurism. We do not subscribe to the view that South Africa's military has a free hand on national security issues and has become a "rogue elephant" on regional issues. Military men do, however, have Botha's ear and have displayed a readiness to use coercion. They are, moreover, in positions to pick and choose how to implement military-related policy decisions and have

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been buoyed by the success to date of their hardline approach. Under these conditions, individual military officers or commands may be tempted to stretch the limits of their orders and engage in unauthorized activities such as we suspect occurred in the case of the coup attempt in the Seychelles in 1981 and in some of the more recent cross-border operations into Zimbabwe. [REDACTED]

Implications for the United States

Persistent South African aggressiveness toward neighboring states along the lines we anticipate will, in our view, continue to complicate US policy toward the region. It will undercut US efforts to encourage the Marxist regimes in Angola and Mozambique to lessen their dependence on the Soviet Bloc and to pursue less radical domestic and foreign policies. We believe, for example, that South Africa's support to UNITA coupled with its hard line on the Cuban withdrawal issue will continue to block an internationally sanctioned Namibian settlement even as the South African military presence in southern Angola whets Luanda's interest in such a settlement. In the absence of a peace settlement and in the face of continued direct and indirect military pressure from South African-backed dissidents, black leaders in Maputo and Luanda will continue to place a premium on the military and political backing they receive from Moscow and its allies. [REDACTED]

We believe, moreover, that coercive South African policies toward Zimbabwe and other relatively pro-Western black governments may yet cause the leaders of these countries to turn away from the comparatively moderate internal and external policies they have been pursuing. Heavyhanded South African actions and the economic problems they have helped create have already caused these leaders to turn to the West—particularly the United States—for more economic assistance, for greater involvement in schemes for easing their dependence on South Africa, and for help in reining in Pretoria. Most black leaders have an exaggerated notion of US economic might and the degree of leverage Washington has over Pretoria and may become increasingly tempted to use the United States as a scapegoat for their problems. [REDACTED]

Continued efforts by Pretoria to win the United States over to its point of view and to make common cause with Washington will make it difficult for the United States to avoid being tarred by black Africa as a whole. A recent editorial broadcast by the government-owned radio network in South Africa is illustrative of Pretoria's tack:

There are growing parallels between the security role of the United States in South and Central America and that of South Africa in this part of the world. The correspondence arises from similar motives: the promotion of stability and strengthening of democratic forces against Communist subversion, and it is being reinforced by the commitment of the United States itself to these goals for southern Africa.

From that joint commitment is emerging a Monroe Doctrine for the region. It is taking shape as new developments lead to a more comprehensive enunciation of the strategy for regional security. As the most advanced and powerful state in the region, South Africa has a special responsibility toward it, as the United States has long had toward its own continent. [REDACTED]

Ultimately, the South Africans could, through unbridled use of their power, create a situation they would not be able to control. In our view, the relative success the South Africans have had thus far with their tough approach to regional affairs may in fact be blinding them to the limits of their power and to the USSR's capabilities for responding on behalf of black regimes in southern Africa. Senior military officers have in fact frequently expressed their contempt for the "Vietnam syndrome" that they believe had crippled US policy by making it unwilling to use military force. They have insisted that South Africans will not make the same mistake. [REDACTED]

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